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U.S. DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

homemakers' chat

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U. S. DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

MONDAY, DECEMBER 28, 1942

SUBJECT: "NOTES ON ICE REFRIGERATORS." Information from home economists of the U. S. Department of Agriculture and officials of the Office of Price Administration. Free Publication: "How to Make Your Refrigerator Last Longer." Order from the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

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Ice boxes made the headlines recently--ice boxes or ice refrigerators, whichever you prefer to call them. Officials of the Office of Price Administration announced that they would soon put dollars-and-cents maximum prices on ice refrigerators. Each different model will have its own top price. The family buying a new refrigerator during the coming year may make a considerable saving, as a result of the new order. These set prices will take care of the ice refrigerators now on the market as well as some 300 thousand new ice refrigerators that manufacturers plan to turn out during 1943.

Since manufacturers stopped making mechanical refrigerators, the demand for ice refrigerators has taken a big jump. The ice refrigerators they are going to make this year will be war models that contain very little steel and meet specifications of the War Production Board.

Whether your refrigerator is new or old, mechanical or ice, you can do a lot to make it last and give you good service by the way you use and care for it. Since ice boxes are in the news right now, let's consider ways to care for them today.

To begin with, home economists of the U. S. Department of Agriculture say, be sure to have your refrigerator in a cool place. See that it stands away from the stove....away from hot air registers or radiators....and where no sun can shine on it. And see that it stands level and firm. Of course, you know that a refrigerator that isn't cold enough inside won't keep food fresh. How cold is cold enough? Well, the home economists say, no colder than 40 degrees Fahrenheit, and no warmer than 50 degrees. How to tell the temperature inside the refrigerator? Put a reliable

thermometer inside about an hour after the door has been closed.

Some ice refrigerators need to be kept full of ice to do their job best. Others of the newer type hold their cold until the ice is almost gone. Whichever kind you have, here's a point to understand. Never cover the ice with paper or anything else to keep it from melting. It's the melting of the ice that keeps the box cold. If you cover the ice to save it, you may spoil good food.

Here's an important point about keeping your refrigerator cold: Open the door as little as possible. Each time you open the door, warm air rushes in. Get as many things together as possible and put them in the refrigerator all at one time. Shut the door quickly.

Now here are a couple of tips on storing: Keep only the foods that need to be cold in the refrigerator. It is a mistake to fill the shelves with pickles, jelly, wrapping paper, cardboard cartons, tops of vegetables and other things that don't need refrigeration--that only use up space and ice. Don't use big bowls or dishes for holding a little food in the refrigerator. Use containers that fit the amount of food. Let warm food cool before you put it in the ice box. Make every inch of space count, but don't stack or pile up dishes if you can help it. Stacking slows up cooling. In most refrigerators it's best to cover all foods those that have their own coverings.

Some little things can damage your ice box...acid on enamel, grease on rubber. Keep the inside lining and shelves of the refrigerator in good condition. Wipe up spills at once. Avoid putting acid foods like a half lemon or a tomato against the enamel finish of the refrigerator. The finish may be acid-resistant, but even so, don't run the risk of letting acid foods stand on it for any length of time. Guard the gasket or rubber seal around the refrigerator door, wiping off any spilled food or grease immediately. You know what grease can do to rubber. Keep your fingers off the rubber gasket, too--since fingers may be greasy or moist so harm the rubber.

Last of all, here are some pointers about cleaning an ice refrigerator.

The best time to clean, of course, is just before fresh ice goes in. Before you wash, of course, you take out what ice there is in the refrigerator and also all food and containers. Wash the inside of the refrigerator, not with soap and water, but with baking soda dissolved in warm water. Use a level tablespoon of soda to every quart of warm water. Wash the entire inside, racks and all. Then go over the surface with a cloth wrung out of clean water, and wipe dry.

In an ice refrigerator the drain pipe and trap under the ice need special attention. Remove and clean them every few weeks. Once a week, flush the drain with a pint of warm water mixed with a tablespoon of soda. If you use natural ice cut from a pond or river, the ice may not be as clear as commercially frozen ice. So the drain may need flushing out every week.

That's all the notes today about looking after an ice box, new or old. Just one more note: You are welcome to a new folder that tells you how to care for a mechanical or ice refrigerator. The folder is called "How to Make Your Refrigerator Last Longer." A postcard addressed to the U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C. will bring it to you.

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